

49 CFR Part 396

Vehicle Maintenance Standards

Vehicle inspection, repair and maintenance are critical to the safe operation of commercial motor vehicles. They are designed to reduce accidents, injuries and fatalities resulting from unsafe vehicles operating on the highways. Maintenance standards cover systematic maintenance, pre-trip/post-trip inspection reports and annual inspections.

General Standards:

393 (Parts and Accessories) and 396 (Inspection, repair and Maintenance)

- A.** A carrier is responsible for ensuring that it properly inspects, repairs and maintains vehicles under its control.
- B.** A motor vehicle may not be operated when its mechanical condition is likely to cause an accident or breakdown.
- C.** Parts and accessories must be in safe operating condition at all times.
- D.** A vehicle must be maintained according to the vehicle manufacturer's recommended schedule, or an improved schedule based on actual operating conditions, and
- E.** Push out windows, emergency doors and emergency door markings lights in buses, must be inspected at least every 90 days.

Motor Carriers who must comply:

The following carriers, operating in interstate/intrastate commerce must comply with the systematic maintenance standards.

- Vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) or gross combination weight rating of 10,001 or more pounds;
- Vehicle is designed to transport more than 15 passengers, including the driver;
- Designed or used to transport more than 8 passengers (including the driver) for compensation; or
- Vehicle is used in the transportation of hazardous materials in a quantity requiring placarding under the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act (HMTA) Regulations.

Required records:

For each vehicle a carrier controls for 30 consecutive days or more, the carrier must ensure the proper vehicle maintenance records are maintained. Each vehicle record must contain:

- A.** Vehicle identification including company number, make, serial number, year and tire size.
- B.** If the vehicle is leased, the person furnishing the vehicle must be identified.
- C.** Due date and type of inspections and maintenance operations to be performed.
- D.** A record of inspections and maintenance operations to be performed.
- E.** A record of tests conducted on push out windows, emergency doors, and emergency door marking lights on buses.

Where must records be maintained?	Vehicle maintenance records must be retained where the vehicle is maintained for a period of one year and for six months after the vehicle leaves the carrier's control.												
Roadside Inspection Reports	Any driver who receives a roadside inspection report must deliver it to the motor carrier. An official of the motor carrier is to examine the roadside inspection report and ensure that the violations or defects noted on the report are correct before the vehicle is re-dispatched. Within 15 days after the inspection, the carrier must sign the completed roadside inspection report to certify that all violations have been corrected and then return it to the indicated address. A copy must be retained for 12 months from the date of inspection.												
Driver Vehicle Inspection Report	<p>The motor carrier shall require a driver vehicle inspection report to be completed at the end of each day's work on each vehicle operated and the report shall cover the following:</p> <table> <tr> <td>Parking (hand) brake</td><td>Steering mechanism</td></tr> <tr> <td>Lighting devices and reflectors</td><td>Horn</td></tr> <tr> <td>Tires</td><td>Windshield wipers</td></tr> <tr> <td>Rear vision mirrors</td><td>Coupling devices</td></tr> <tr> <td>Wheels and rims</td><td>Emergency equipment</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Service brakes including trailer brake connections</td></tr> </table> <p>The report shall identify the vehicle, any defect or deficiency discovered by or report to the driver which would affect the safety of operation of the vehicle or result in its mechanical breakdown. If no defect is discovered by or report to the driver, the report shall so indicate. In all instances, the driver shall sign the report.</p>	Parking (hand) brake	Steering mechanism	Lighting devices and reflectors	Horn	Tires	Windshield wipers	Rear vision mirrors	Coupling devices	Wheels and rims	Emergency equipment	Service brakes including trailer brake connections	
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When defects are noted on the Driver Vehicle Inspection Report:	<p>Prior to requiring or permitting a driver to operate a vehicle the motor carrier shall repair any defect or deficiency listed on the driver vehicle inspection report which would likely affect the safety of operation of the vehicle. Every motor carrier or its agent shall certify on the original driver vehicle inspection report which lists any defect that the defect has been repaired or that repair is unnecessary before the vehicle is operated again. These reports shall be maintained for a period of three months.</p> <p>Before driving a motor vehicle the driver shall be satisfied that the vehicle is in safe operating condition, review the last driver vehicle inspection report; and sign the report if defects or deficiencies were noted by the driver who prepared the report to acknowledge that the driver has reviewed it and that there is a certification that the required repairs have been performed.</p>												
Periodic Inspections	Every commercial vehicle shall have a periodic inspection that must be performed at least once every 12 months. At a minimum, inspections must include all items enumerated in the Minimum Periodic Inspection Standards, Appendix G, Subchapter B, Part 396. Carriers may perform required annual												

Inspector qualifications

inspections themselves, with a qualified inspector. The original or copy of the periodic inspection report must be retained by the motor carrier for 14 months from the report date.

Documentation of the most recent periodic inspection must be kept on the vehicle. (report, sticker or decal)

A motor carrier must ensure that the individual(s) performing an annual inspection is qualified. The inspector must:

1. Understand the inspection standards of Part 393 and Appendix G.
2. Be able to identify defective components.
3. Have knowledge and proficiency in methods, procedures and tools.

What experience or training qualifies an inspector?

Inspectors may have gained experience or training by:

- T Completing a State/Federal training program, or earning a State or Canadian Province qualifying certificate in commercial motor vehicle safety inspections.
- T A combination of other training or experience totaling at least a year.

Evidence of Qualifications

Evidence of the inspector's qualifications must be maintained until one year after the inspector ceases to perform inspections for the carrier.

Periodic Equivalent

The motor carrier may meet periodic inspection requirements through:

1. State or other jurisdiction roadside inspection program or
2. Mandatory State inspection program. These programs must be determined by the FHWA to be comparable to the Federal Annual Inspection Program.

Brake Inspectors

The motor carrier is responsible for ensuring that all inspections, maintenance, repairs and service to brakes of commercial motor vehicles comply with these regulations. Employees responsible for brake inspections, maintenance, service or repairs must meet minimum brake inspector qualifications.

For additional assistance contact: Utah Department of Transportation, Motor Carrier Division (801-965-4951) This fact sheet is intended as a resource. It is not intended to explain all requirements of Utah law. Contact our office for additional assistance. 04/00